

RUSSIA AND THE WEST IN IRAN

of the population was fearful of Russia and of the consequences of her occupation in the north.

When Iran formally declared war on Germany in September, 1943, it was not so much a manifestation of hatred against the Reich or of friendship toward the Allies. By this act Iran expressed her conviction that the Germans had lost the war and ensured her position on the winning side.

That was about as much as Iran could do on her own initiative in the field of foreign policy. Iran's impotence was well illustrated at the time of the Russo-British-American Conference, which took place in Teheran in November, 1943. The Allies chose Teheran for their meeting place without consulting the Iranian government. Premier Soheily was even not informed of the exact time of Stalin's, Roosevelt's, and Churchill's arrivals. In fact he learned of this event by mere accident. He was notified officially by the Allied embassies of the event only after gossip of the presence of the Big Three had made the rounds of the town.

The conference was primarily devoted to European problems and war strategy. Hence it was not unnatural that the presence of Iranian representatives was not required. Yet, even at the time when the problems of Iran were discussed, the Iranian government was not invited to participate.

As it turned out, the conference, so tragic in its decisions concerning eastern Europe, proved to be of inestimable benefit to the Iranians. The Declaration on Iran, signed by Stalin, Roosevelt, and Churchill, recognized the assistance that Iran had given in the Allied war effort; promised economic aid; reaffirmed Iran's independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity; and reiterated

the Allies' adherence to the principles of the Atlantic Charter.³

To speak of Iranian foreign policy during the war years is to use something of a misnomer. Occupied by Russia and Britain and harboring American troops as well, Iran obviously had limited freedom of movement. Theoretically she could have tried to sabotage the Allied war effort, but such a policy would have been suicidal and, at any rate, could not have been of long duration. Within the limited range of possibilities Iran's foreign policy chiefly was linked to her

³ For the full text see Appendix no. III.